

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 FRB-03 INR-10

NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EPAP MILI ET SO CU

SUBJ: CUBANS ACKNOWLEDGE INCREASED SUGAR HARVEST LAGS

REF: HAVANA 0988

1. GRANMA EDITORIAL, APRIL 18, STATES THAT, DESPITE GOOD WEATHER, LEVEL OF SUGAR PRODUCTION IN SECOND WEEK OF APRIL DIMINISHED SIGNIFICANTLY. PRODUCTION DROP IS ATTRIBUTED TO LACK OF DELIVERY OF CANE FROM FIELDS DUE TO: A. SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER (HAND CUTTERS), (B) WORKER ABSENTEEISM, (C) LOW PRODUCTIVITY, (D) DIFFICULTY IN LOADING CANE, AND (E) BREAKDOWN OF MECHANICAL HARVESTERS.

2. HUNGARIAN COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR (SOS), APRIL 17, INDICATED THAT BULGARIANS HAVE APPARENTLY ENCOUNTERED SOME DELAYS IN RECEIVING SUGAR DELIVERIES.

3. COMMENT: DROP OF SUGAR PRODUCTION IN SECOND WEEK OF APRIL IS SURPRISING, CONSIDERING EXCELLENT WEATHER. SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER WHICH CASTRO FLAGGED IN HIS RECENT
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TOUR OF INDUSTRIAL CONSTRUCTION SITES ON THE ISLAND APPARENTLY CONTINUES ALSO TO PLAGUE THE HARVEST. WHILE IT IS TOO LATE IN SEASON FOR ANY MILITARY DEMOBILIZATION FROM AFRICA TO HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON HARVEST, RAUL CASTRO'S APRIL 16 MILITIA DAY HONORS FOR NON-ACTIVE DUTY PERSONNEL--PROMOTION OF "NUMEROUS" RESERVE OFFICERS AND SPEECHES CALLING FOR SIMULTANEOUS PERFORMANCE OF BOTH

CIVILIAN WORK AND MILITARY TRAINING-- MAY BE INTENDED TO
SIGNAL THAT AFRICA-RELATED CALLS TO ACTIVE DUTY HAVE REACHED
PLATEAU FOR MOMENT.

4. WITH REGARD TO WORKER ABSENTEEISM,
SOVIET TRADE REPRESENTATIVE HAS INFORMED US THAT THIS HAS
BECOME MAJOR PROBLEM BECAUSE OF GOC NEGLIGENCE IN APPROPRIATELY
MANIPULATING ECONOMIC LEVERS. ON ONE HAND, DUE TO SHORTAGE
OF CONSUMER GOODS, WORKERS HAVE LITTLE INCENTIVE TO ACCUMULATE
MONEY AND, ON THE OTHER, DUE TO STATE SUBSIDIZATION OF BASIC
FOOD AND CLOTHING AND EXISTENCE OF RATION SYSTEM. FAILURE TO
ACCUMULATE SIGNIFICANT SUMS OF MONEY HAS LITTLE PENALTY
ATTACHED. SOVIET ALSO SAID THAT GOC IN PAST HAD FAILED TO
FINE OR PENALIZE FACTORIES THAT FELL BEHIND IN THEIR
CONSTRUCTION OR PRODUCTION PLANS. NOW, PENALTIES WILL
BE IMPOSED, INCLUDING ON INSTALLATIONS BEING BUILT BY SOVIETS.

5. AS REGARDS DIFFICULTIES IN LOADING CANE AND BREAKDOWN
OF MECHANICAL HARVESTERS, SOME OF THESE PROBLEMS ARE
APPARENTLY DUE TO WEATHER CONDITIONS--WETNESS OF CANE AND
PENETRATION OF MUD INTO MACHINE PARTS. NONETHELESS, AS
HARVEST STRETCHES BEYOND USUAL 120-140 DAY LENGTH (IT
BEGAN AROUND DECEMBER 1), MACHINES BOTH IN FIELDS AND MILLS
WILL INCREASINGLY BREAK DOWN. PRESUMABLY, FATIGUE MAY
ALSO BECOME A FACTOR ON MANPOWER SIDE AS WELL.

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